

ONLY YOU Can Prevent Bear Problems

Are you prepared to be in bear country?

Do you have the equipment and knowledge to be in bear country?

- Keep a clean camp. Never keep food, toiletries or the clothes you cooked in, in your tent.
- Properly store your food: Never leave food or coolers out. Put all food and toiletries (yes bears are attracted toothpaste or soap) away.
- In the front country, lock food, toiletries, and coolers in closed vehicles. Use the bear-proof dumpsters or store garbage in closed vehicle. If you don't have a closed vehicle, bring your own bear-proof canister or lock box.
- In the backcountry, have the equipment and the experience to do a proper bear hang – and have a backup plan. Not all campsites have adequate features for a successful bear hang. We highly recommend having a bear-proof canister with you.

What do you if you encounter a bear?

Wild bears have a natural fear of humans and will attempt to avoid people and developed areas. Bears will often be in the distance and will move off on their own. You may never even encounter a bear during your visit to the White Mountain National Forest, but if you do, here's what to do.

If you are hiking and encounter a bear, stop. In closer encounters, you can raise your hands and say "whoa bear, whoa" and slowly back away. Remove yourself from the situation.

If you stop for a picnic lunch out of your backpack, keep it right next to you and don't walk away from it. Just those few moments away are enough for a bear to successfully steal your pack.

If you're camping and a bear wanders into your site, stop, and slowly back away. Remove yourself from the situation. If car camping, you might even slip into your car until the bear moves on.

Take Away:

Are you prepared to be in bear country?" Can you secure your food overnight? This means keeping a clean camp, putting food away and coolers in secure vehicles, or having a bear-proof canister or equipment and experience to do a proper bear hang. **If you are prepared and feel comfortable, you may decide to keep your itinerary. However, if you aren't prepared, perhaps it's time to rethink your plans.**

And if visitors have a conflict encounter – not necessarily just seeing a bear in the wild – but an encounter where the bear shows signs of no longer being afraid, of getting into their coolers, food stuff, tents or back of trucks (etc) – **Visitors need to report incidents to the campground host or to a Forest Service visitor center/office.**

More info online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/white> or at NH Fish and Game at http://www.wildnh.com/Wildlife/Somethings_Bruin.htm.